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SCIENCE

FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 1919

MEDICINE AND GROWTH¹

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DOUBTLESS friends have congratulated you on the fact that you were "through." In one sense—a strictly academic sense—that is true, else you would not be here, subject to this ordeal. But perhaps there is another way of looking at the situation. The Greek philosopher, Pyrrho, contended that against every statement the contradictory may be advanced with equal reason, and following this estimable skeptic, I feel justified in the assertion that, as a matter of fact, you are not "through," but rather are just commencing doctor of medicine, if one may give the word commence its older meaning.

You have qualified for a degree—a degree which entitles you to membership in a learned profession—that, like the church and the law, has the distinguishing responsibility of dealing with matters of life and death.

A profession makes heavier claims on its representatives than does a trade or an art, for in the nature of the case it demands continued progress, and it is part of the unwritten law that those who enjoy the prestige which such a position brings, should leave their profession better than they found it.

To do this implies progress—progress by growth, and it is the idea of growth that I wish to use as a guiding thread for the conduct of this talk. It is my purpose then to say a word concerning growth as it affects that very important person, the patient; then to speak of growth as it touches the body of medical knowledge; and finally to consider growth as it affects the physician in his riper years.

To follow an old time form let me announce

¹ Address to the graduates of the Medical Department of New York University. Delivered at the special commencement exercises, held at University Heights, New York, on Saturday, March 1, 1919.